

University of Massachusetts Medical School

eScholarship@UMMS

Library Publications and Presentations

Lamar Soutter Library

2014-11-03

Literature Search Strategy Week: Molly Higgins on the Best Databases for Everything

Molly Higgins

University of Massachusetts Medical School Worcester

Follow this and additional works at: https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/lib_articles



Part of the [Health Services Administration Commons](#), [Health Services Research Commons](#), and the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Higgins M. (2014). Literature Search Strategy Week: Molly Higgins on the Best Databases for Everything. Library Publications and Presentations. Retrieved from https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/lib_articles/170

This material is brought to you by eScholarship@UMMS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Library Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of eScholarship@UMMS. For more information, please contact Lisa.Palmer@umassmed.edu.

Molly Higgins on the Best Databases for Everything

Hi, I'm **Molly Higgins**, a librarian at the [Lamar Soutter Library](#), University of Massachusetts Medical School. Today we're going to talk about planning your search because planning ahead saves a lot of work in the long run. One part of planning is choosing your database(s). Maybe you're used to using Google for everything. Maybe you use PubMed when you're searching for scholarly literature. They're both awesome tools, but if you only have a hammer then every problem is a nail.

Research and evaluation needs are not nails.

The goal of this post is to expand your toolbox so that you can pick the right tools for the right jobs.

Biomedical Databases

What they are: [PubMed](#), [Ovid](#), [Embase](#)

What they do: PubMed is great because it's so specific. You can trust it to bring up reliable biomedical research and evaluation information because it searches Medline. Medline is a database with over 21 million citations and adding more every day. And because it has the specialized thesaurus MeSH, you can search for very specific topics. Ovid and Embase also search Medline, but the functionality is different, so they'll give you slightly different results. This is great for systematic reviews—it's like double checking your work.

Interdisciplinary Databases

What they are: [Google](#), [Scopus](#), [Web of Science](#)

What they do: Huge, wide-ranging databases are a great place to start your search if you don't know what you're looking for; if you're doing interdisciplinary work; or you're looking for non-scholarly/unpublished work. Big academic databases sometimes have cool tools, like citation mappers.

Specialized Databases

What they are: [HaPI](#), [Grey Literature Report](#), [CancerData.org](#), [Global Health](#), etc.

What they do: It depends! If you're looking for a specific type of resource, try a specialized database. I've highlighted a few.

HaPI (Health and Psychosocial Instruments): My go to place for tested, reliable assessment instruments (questionnaires, rating scales, interview forms, etc.) for health and behavioral sciences. If I didn't have HaPI, I'd be sad.

Grey Literature Report: My colleague Len will talk grey literature in a later blog post, so if you're not excited now, you will be. The Report is one place to go to look for grey literature.

CancerData.org: One of many data repositories where you can download data for secondary research, or to verify someone else's work.

Global Health: Covers public health topics for the US and internationally. If you're a public health researcher or evaluator, you probably don't consider this a specialized database.

Rad Resources

Your top ten databases:

| | Name | Category | URL | Free? |
|-----|------------------------|-------------------|---|---|
| 1. | PubMed | Biomedical | http://www.pubmed.gov | Free to search, free full text through PubMed Central |
| 2. | Ovid | Biomedical | http://www.ovid.com or through your institution | No |
| 3. | Embase | Biomedical | http://www.embase.com or through your institution | No |
| 4. | Google | Interdisciplinary | http://google.com/ and http://scholar.google.com/ | Free! |
| 5. | Scopus | Interdisciplinary | http://www.scopus.com/ or through your institution | No |
| 6. | Web of Science | Interdisciplinary | http://www.webofscience.com/ or through your institution | No |
| 7. | HaPI | Specialized | http://www.bmdshapi.com/ or through your institution | No |
| 8. | Grey Literature Report | Specialized | http://www.greylit.org/ | Free! |
| 9. | CancerData.org | Specialized | https://www.cancerdata.org/ | Free! |
| 10. | Global Health | Specialized | http://www.cabi.org/publishing-products/online-information-resources/global-health/ or through your institution | No |